

Is There a *wāw al-maʿiyyah* in Biblical Hebrew?

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1. Introduction

The conjunction *wāw* in Biblical Hebrew is commonly regarded as conveying coordination, but also numerous other meanings. The issue of the multiple meanings of the conjunction *wāw* has attracted the attention of Biblical Hebrew (hereafter: BH) scholars over the years. Their discussions of this issue are presented in dictionaries, grammars, and several studies. In the present article I do not deal with all the meanings attached to the conjunction *wāw* in BH down the ages and their justification, but only one of those meanings, namely the *wāw* of concomitance or accompaniment, commonly named after the Arabic term *wāw al-maʿiyyah*.

2. Survey of Literature

Phrases and clauses coordinated by the conjunctive *wāw* are sometimes regarded as conveying meanings other than sheer coordination, such as contrast, disjunction, explanation, simultaneity, and more, in BH and in other Semitic languages as well. One particular meaning identified by Arabic grammarians regarding the *wāw* in Arabic is concomitance or accompaniment. Arabic terms employed for the *wāw* in this meaning are *wāw al-maʿiyyah*, *wāw al-muṣāḥabah*, and *wāw al-jamʿ*. The conjunction interpreted in this fashion joins together two words or phrases, usually subjects and occasionally objects of the same verb, as well as certain types of simultaneous clauses. The meaning of this particle in such cases is basically “with” or “together with.” A second member of such pairs of words or phrases is understood to fulfill the function of an object instead of a second subject when it is grammatically marked by an accusative. The Arabic term for the second member in the accusative is *mafʿūl maʿahu*. When pronouns come second in such pairs they are usually attached to the otherwise rare accusative particle *ʿiyyā-*. A simultaneous clause regarded as coordinated by *wāw al-maʿiyyah* contains a verb in the subjunctive.¹

1. On these terms in Arabic see Th. Nöldeke, *Zur Grammatik des klassischen Arabisch* (Wien, 1897; repr.: Darmstadt, 1963), 42, §36; W. Wright, *A Grammar of the Arabic Language*, 3rd ed. rev. by W. R. Smith and M. J. Goeje (Cambridge, 1898), 2.32c–33a, §15, 84b,d, §37; C. Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen* (Berlin, 1913), 2.8–9, §5; H. Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax* (Heidelberg, 1921), 325–27, §165, 11, 462, §231; W. Fischer, *A Grammar of Classical Arabic*, 3rd ed., trans. J. Rodgers (New Haven-London, 2002), 175–76, §328b, 211, §410.1; and see G. Lancioni, “Il *mafʿūl maʿahu* nel pensiero linguistico arabo dei primi secoli,” *Rivista degli studi orientali* 69 (1995), 33–49

The idea of ascribing such a meaning to certain occurrences of the *wāw* in BH arose already in the Middle Ages among Hebrew grammarians who were influenced by the Arabic and the Arab grammatical thinking of their time. An early example of such an interpretation appears in Saadya Gaon's translation of the Pentateuch at Exod. 1:5: **וַיְהִי כָּל-נֶפֶשׁ יִצְאֵי יֶרֶךְ-יַעֲקֹב שְׁבַעִים נֶפֶשׁ וַיֹּסֶף הָיָה בְּמִצְרַיִם**—"All the offspring of Jacob were seventy persons; **Joseph was already in Egypt.**"² Four versions of Saadya Gaon's translation display two distinct renderings of this verse as follows:³

(1) Ms. St. Petersburg: **וְכָאן גְּמִלָה אֶלְכָּאֲרָגוֹן מִן צֶלֶב יַעֲקֹב סְבַעִין נַפְסָא מִעַ יוֹסֵף וְהוּא בְּמִצְרַיִם**—"All the offspring of Jacob were seventy persons **with (including) Joseph, while he was in Egypt.**"

(2) Derenbourg edition/ Ḥasīd edition/ London Polyglot: **וְכָאן גְּמִלָה אֶלְכָּאֲרָגוֹן מִן צֶלֶב יַעֲקֹב סְבַעִין נַפְסָא מִעַ יוֹסֵף אֱלֵדִי כָאן בְּמִצְרַיִם**—"All the offspring of Jacob were seventy persons **with (including) Joseph, who was in Egypt.**"

All four versions display *מִעַ* for the *wāw* in the translation, though they differ in the way they render the subsequent clause, either by a circumstantial clause introduced by *wāw* in Ms. St. Petersburg or by a relative clause introduced by *אֱלֵדִי* in the Derenbourg edition, the Ḥasīd edition, and the London Polyglot. The interpretation of the *wāw* in this verse as "with" is probably due to the need to solve a difficulty in the verse, since the status and meaning of its second clause in the context are problematic. First, the clause **וַיֹּסֶף הָיָה בְּמִצְרַיִם** in this verse displays a loose connection to the context. The loose connection probably stems from its being a circumstantial clause with a parenthetical status, as it adds explanatory information to the narrative. Second, its attachment to the preceding clause is odd, because Joseph is supposed to be included in the count of the descendants of Jacob.⁴

for discussion of the term *maf'ul ma'ahu* among early Arab grammarians. Baalbaki refers to cases of *wāw* followed by a subjunctive, which are sometimes also defined by Arab grammarians as representing a type of *wāw al-ma'iyah* (R. Baalbaki, "On the Meaning of the *wāw al-ma'iyah* Construction," *Al-ʿarabiyya* 19 [1986], 7–17). This type might be understood as expressing simultaneity (e.g., Wright, *Grammar*, 32c–33a, §15), while Baalbaki suggests that it might express not simultaneity but consequence and succession.

2. English translations are according to the RSV with modifications when certain issues require it.

3. The four versions are: Ms. St. Petersburg: *National Library Ebr. II C*, Israel National Library—Mic. 69089, 69895 (St. Petersburg, <1009>) = Ms. St. Petersburg; J. Derenbourg et al., eds., *Oeuvres complètes de R. Saadia ben Josef al-Fayyūmī I, Version arabe du pentateuque* (Paris, 1893 / Hildesheim-New York, 1979) = Derenbourg edition; A. Ḥasīd, *ספר כתר תורה הנקרא בלשון קדמונינו תאג*, (Jerusalem, 1968) = Ḥasīd edition; *The Pentateuch in Hebrew, Samaritan, Chaldee, Greek, Syriac Arabic, Ethiopic and Persian* (London, 1657) = London Polyglot.

4. On the parenthetical status of this clause, on its problematic status, and on the translations by Saadya Gaon and others of this verse, see T. Zewi, *Parenthesis in Biblical Hebrew* (Leiden, 2007), 78–79, §2.3.3. This clause and its interpretation by Saadya Gaon according to the Derenbourg edition are also cited in R. C. Steiner, "Does the Biblical Hebrew Conjunction *w-* Have Many Meanings, One Meaning, or No Meaning at All?" *JBL* 119 (2000), 253, in reference to the multiple meanings ascribed in this period to the *wāw*. Ratzaby mentions two more verses in which Saadya Gaon translates the *wāw* by *ma'a*: Deut. 22:9 and Job 21:1 (Y. Ratzaby, "הוראות הוי' בתפסיר רב סעדיה גאון," in Y. Ben-Shem et al., eds., *Sefer Yosef Braslavi [Braslavski]* [Jerusalem, 1970], 457 [Heb.]). See also R. C. Steiner, "Saadia vs. Rashi: on the Shift from Meaning-Maximalism to Meaning-Minimalism in Medieval Biblical Hebrew Lexicography," *JQR* 88 (1998), 222–23, §5.

An early grammatical reference to this issue appears already in the grammatical work of Jonah Ibn Janah (990–1050), not long after Saadya Gaon’s time (882–942).⁵ Ibn Janah mentions Exod. 1:5, discussed above, and adds to it 1 Sam. 14:18: וַיֹּאמֶר שָׁאוּל לְאַחִיָּה הַגִּישָׁה אֶרֶון הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי-הִיא אֶרֶון הָאֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל —“And Saul said to Ahijah, ‘Bring hither the ark of God’. For the ark of God went at that time **with the people of Israel**.” The second verse probably includes the most obvious example of what may be regarded as *wāw al-maʿiyyah* in BH.⁶ Accordingly, Steiner, in his discussion of the *wāw* in BH, is probably right in suggesting that the tendency to interpret the *wāw* by multiple meanings is the result of grammatical approaches in the early Middle Ages. Steiner also convincingly shows that this tendency was reduced among later medieval grammarians and recurred only in post-medieval Christian grammars, which were the source and inspiration of the multiple explanations found in various western grammars and dictionaries up to the present.⁷

Indeed, Modern BH dictionaries and grammars usually agree on the existence of *wāw al-maʿiyyah* in BH. For example, four important BH dictionaries give in their entries on the conjunction *wāw* the meaning “with,” albeit not necessarily do so in the same detail. *BDB*, for example, indicates this meaning not in reference to subsequent words and phrases but only to certain circumstantial clauses, as follows:

In *circumstantial* clauses ו introduces a statement of the *concomitant conditions* under which the action denoted by the principal verb takes place: in such cases, the relation expressed by ו must often in Engl. be stated explicitly by a conj., as *when, since, seeing, though*, etc., as occasion may require.⁸

BDB cites in this connection only Gen. 11:4: וַיֹּאמְרוּ הֶבֶה נִבְנֶה-לָּנוּ עִיר וּמִגְדָּל וְרֵאשׁוּ בְּשִׂמְיָם —“Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower **with its top in the heavens**’.” Likewise the circumstantial clause וְרֵאשׁוּ בְּשִׂמְיָם is translated by the RSV by the preposition “with.” Such an English translation is typical of some circumstantial clauses. All this notwithstanding, it remains to be seen whether the *wāw* in this verse and similar cases could be considered to display a special independent meaning “with,” distinct from the regular meaning of coordination, which is usually ascribed to the *wāw* introducing a circumstantial clause.

5. J. Derenbourg, ed., *Le livre des parterres fleuris: grammaire hébraïque en arabe d’Abou’l-Walid Merwan Ibn Djanah de cordoue* (Paris, 1886), 50, lines 9–12, and its Medieval Hebrew translation in M. Wilensky, ed., *Sefer ha-riḳmah by Ibn Janāh, Abū al-Walid Marwān, trans. by Yehudah ibn Tibon*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem, 1964), 63 [Heb.]. A discussion of Ibn Janah’s treatment of the various roles of *wāw* is found in Ratzaby, “הוראות הוי”ו בתפסיר רב סעדיה גאון,” 445–46, and in Steiner, “Does the Biblical Hebrew Conjunction,” 253–54. Ratzaby claims that all the meanings mentioned by Jonah Ibn Janah can be traced in Saadya’s translations (Ratzaby, “445–46 הוראות הוי”ו”; Steiner, “Does the Biblical Hebrew Conjunction,” 253–54, n. 26).

6. However, note that the LXX reads in this verse לפני ישראל “before Israel” instead of וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל “with the people of Israel.”

7. Steiner, “Does the Biblical Hebrew Conjunction,” 254. On a general shift from meaning-maximalism to meaning-minimalism in medieval BH lexicography and on Saadya’s preference for contextual meaning versus Rashi’s preference for basic meaning, see Steiner, “Saadia vs. Rashi,” 213–58.

8. *BDB*, 253a–b, 1k.

Another dictionary, *HALOT*, is more decisive in its presentation of the meaning “with,” or rather “together with,” for certain examples of the *wāw*.⁹ The examples displayed in its entry for *wāw* include only joint words and phrases. Thus Isa. 42:5: כה-אמר האל ה' בורא השמים ונוטיהם רקע הארץ וצאצאיה נתן נשמה לעם עליה ורוח להלכים —“Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth **together with what comes from it**, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it,” cited in this entry, refers to two joint noun-phrases; Exod. 12:8: ואכלו את-הבשר בלילה הזה צלי-אש ומצות על-מררים יאכלהו —“They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted; **together with unleavened bread** and bitter herbs they shall eat it,” refers again to two joint noun-phrases; and Exod. 21:4: אם-אדניו יתן-לו אשה וילדה-לו בנים או בנות האשה וילדיה תהיה לאדניה והוא יצא בגפו —“If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife **with her children** shall be her master’s and he shall go out alone,” contains two subjects that do not agree in number with a following predicate. The meaning “together with/in the company of” is also indicated in *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* edited by Clines, where it is demonstrated by Exod. 12:8 and Exod. 21:4, cited above.¹⁰

The recent *Dictionary of BH* by Kaddari ascribes the meaning “together with” to certain word-pairs as well, citing Gen. 44:2: ואת-גביעי גביע הכסף תשים בפי אמתחת: הקטן ואת כסף שברו —“And put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, **together with his money for the grain**”; Est. 4:16: לך כנוס את-כל-היהודים: הנמצאים בשושן וצומו עלי ואל-תאכלו ואל-תשתו שלשת ימים לילה ויום גם-אני ונערת אצוי —“Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and neither eat nor drink for three days, night or day. I **together with my maids** will also fast as you do. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law; and if I perish, I perish,” where the subjects do not agree in number with the predicate; and again Exod. 21:4, cited above.¹¹

Kaddari also compares 2 Sam. 8:18: ובניהו בן-יהוידע והפרתי והפלתו ובני דוד כהנים: הוי —“And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was **over the Cherethites and the Pelethites**; and David’s sons were priests,” with similar pairs in 1 Chr. 18:17: ובניהו בן-יהוידע: על-הפרתי והפלתו ובני-דוד הראשנים ליד המלך —“And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was **over the Cherethites and the Pelethites**; and David’s sons were the chief officials in the service of the king” and 1 Kgs. 1:38: וירד צדוק הכהן ונתן הנביא ובניהו בן-יהוידע: והפרתי והפלתו —“So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, **and the Cherethites and the Pelethites**, went down and caused Solomon to ride on King David’s mule, and brought him to Gihon.” The *wāw* in these examples alternates with the preposition על, and Kaddari interprets the coordination in all these cases as conveying “together with.” This meaning, however, is not mandatory in these cases. The *RSV*, as illustrated in the translations above, renders the conjunction in these verses twice by “over” and once as a regular coordination. Kaddari’s last example is 1 Sam. 17:34: ויאמר דוד אל-שאול רעה הנה עבדך לאביו בצאן ובא הארי ואת-הדוב ונשא שׁה: מהעדר —“But David said to Saul, ‘Your servant used to keep sheep for his father; and

9. *HALOT*, 258, 4.

10. D. J. A. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield, 1995), 596, 3.

11. M. Z. Kaddari, *A Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew (Alef-Taw): Oṣar Leṣon ha-Miqra’ me-Alef ‘ad Taw* (Ramat-Gan, 2006), 231, 9 [Heb.].

וְהִמְשִׁינָהּ הַחֲלָוִת לְרִגְלָהּ וַתֵּלֶךְ אַחֲרָי מִלְּאֲכִי דָוִד וַתְּהִי-לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה
 haste and rose and rode upon an ass, **with her five maidens who attended her**; she
 went after the messengers of David, and became his wife”; and 2 Sam. 12:30: וַיִּקַּח
 וַיִּקַּח דָּוִד אֶת-עֲטֹרֶת-מֶלֶכָם מֵעַל רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּמְשָׁקֶלָהּ כֶּכֶר זָהָב וַאֲבָן יְקָרָה וַתְּהִי עַל-רֹאשׁ דָּוִד
 “And he took the crown of their king from his head; the weight of it was a talent of gold, **with a precious stone**; and it was placed on David’s head.” In the first example a series of objects is separated from the first object. In the second example the subjects do not agree in number with their predicate verb. In the third example the joint noun-phrase וַאֲבָן יְקָרָה seems to be included in the crown and not joint to it.¹⁶

In addition, Williams’ grammar is the only work that interprets the *wāw* introducing certain circumstantial clauses as a conjunction of accompaniment.¹⁷ In our survey thus far such an interpretation was offered only by one dictionary, *BDB*. Williams illustrates this function with regular circumstantial clauses in Deut. 5:23: וַיְהִי כִשְׁמֹעְכֶם
 “And when you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, **while the mountain was burning with fire**, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes, and your elders.” “While” is found in the translation of this verse both in the *RSV* and in Williams’ grammar; 1 Sam. 17:41: וַיֵּלֶךְ הַפָּלִשְׁתִּי הַלֵּךְ וַקָּרַב אֶל-דָּוִד וְהָאִישׁ נֹשֵׂא הַצָּנָה לִפְנָיו
 “And the Philistine came on and drew near to David, **with his shield-bearer in front of him**”; 1 Kgs. 18:2: וַיֵּלֶךְ אֵלֵיהֶם לְהִרְאוֹת אֶל-אַחָב וְהָרָעָב חָזָק בְּשֹׁמְרוֹן
 “Elijah went to show himself to Ahab. **Now the famine was severe in Samaria**,” which is translated by Williams as: “. . . while the famine was severe in Samaria”; 2 Kgs. 8:7: וַיָּבֹא אֵלֵישָׁע
 “Now Elisha came to Damascus, **while Ben-hadad the king of Syria was sick**”; and Gen. 11:4, cited above.¹⁸

Williams also includes under this category the following asyndetic circumstantial clauses: Exod. 12:11: וְכָכָה תֹאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ מִתַּיִכֶם חֲגָרִים נַעֲלֵיכֶם בְּרִגְלֵיכֶם וּמַקְלָכֶם בְּיָדְכֶם
 “In this manner you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste. **It is the Lord’s Passover**,” “Since it is *YHWH*’s Passover,” according to Williams; Exod. 22:9: כִּי-יִתֵּן אִישׁ אֶל-רֵעֵהוּ חֲמֹר אוֹ-שׁוֹר אוֹ-שֶׂה וְכָל-בְּהֵמָה לְשֹׁמֵר וַיָּמָת אוֹ-נֹשֶׁבֶר אוֹ-נֹשֶׁבָה
 “If a man delivers to his neighbor an ass or an ox or a sheep or any beast to keep, and it dies or is hurt or is driven away, **without any one seeing it**.”¹⁹ But note that in such cases the circumstantial clause is in any case not connected to the main clause by *wāw*.

16. R. J. Williams, *Williams’ Hebrew Syntax*, 3rd ed. rev. by J. C. Beckman (Toronto, 2007), 154, §436. Note that 1 Chr. 20:2, the parallel verse of 2 Sam. 12:30, has a different version: וַיִּקַּח דָּוִד אֶת-עֲטֹרֶת-מֶלֶכָם מֵעַל רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּמְצָאָהּ מִשְׁקָל כֶּכֶר זָהָב וּבֶה אֲבָן יְקָרָה וַתְּהִי עַל-רֹאשׁ דָּוִד
 “And David took the crown of their king from his head; he found that it weighed a talent of gold, **and in it was a precious stone**; and it was placed on David’s head.”

17. Ibid., 176, §494.

18. Loc. cit.

19. Loc. cit. On this matter see also J. C. L. Gibson, “Coordination by Vav in Biblical Hebrew,” in J. Davies et al., eds., *Words Remembered, Texts Renewed: Essays in Honor of John F. A. Sawyer* (Sheffield, 1995), 275, who classifies such examples, translated by “while,” “when,” and “with,” with nominal phrases, as no more than circumstantial.

In conclusion of this survey of important BH grammars that deal with the *wāw* of concomitance/accompaniment, it should be added that not all grammars accept its existence or pay any attention to it. For example, the list of numerous functions of the conjunction *wāw* in the index of topics in the detailed BH syntax of Waltke and O'Connor does not refer to this function at all.²⁰

Studies dealing with this function of the *wāw* are few, and those that treat of it usually do so within a discussion of other functions of the *wāw*. Steiner's article has already been mentioned. As to the question of multiple meanings, Steiner tends to suggest that the number of meanings attached to the *wāw* should be significantly reduced.²¹ He examines the adversative ("but") and circumstantial ("while") meanings of the *wāw* and asserts that the special status of these clauses derives from their distinctive word order and should not be attributed to the conjunction.²² He also examines the disjunctive meaning of the *wāw* ("or") and avers that this meaning is logically implicit in the structure and arrangement of the sentence constituents and should not be attributed to the conjunction.²³ Next Steiner questions the consequential ("then") and the explanatory ("that is") meanings of the *wāw* and relates them to the syntactic structure and not to an autonomous lexical meaning.²⁴ Finally, Steiner discusses the use of the *wāw* as a coordinator and draws the conclusion that this conjunction can sometimes be meaningless, but when it is meaningful it functions only as a coordinator, while all the other meanings attached to it should be eliminated.²⁵

Another study, by Hans-Peter Müller, is dedicated to the non-conjunctive uses of the *wāw*, among which he discusses the *wāw* concomitantiae / *wāw al-maʿiyyah*.²⁶ Müller generally accepts its existence, and demonstrates it by Lev. 1:12, 1 Sam. 14:18, and Est. 4:16, cited above.²⁷ More recently, Augustine R. Müller proposes reducing the number of meanings ascribed to the *wāw*, and he especially denies the existence of the concomitant *wāw* and the *wāw adaequationis* (comparative). He indicates that explaining the role of the *wāw* is usually meant to solve difficulties in the Hebrew text where subjects and their predicate do not agree, and suggests that such examples are better explained by comparison to Arabic rules of agreement than by the concomitant *wāw*.²⁸ Contrariwise, Azevedo discusses not the conjunction *wāw* but compound subject agreement, and observes that the *wāw* that coordinates two subjects when the verb is in the singular can be considered *wāw* of accompaniment.²⁹

20. B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, IN, 1990), 733.

21. Steiner, "Does the Biblical Hebrew Conjunction," 257–67.

22. Ibid., 257–61.

23. Ibid., 261–63.

24. Ibid., 263–65.

25. Ibid., 265–67.

26. H. P. Müller, "Nicht-junktiver Gebrauch von w- im Althebraischen," *ZAH* 7 (1994), 141–74. The discussion of the *wāw* concomitantiae / *wāw al-maʿiyyah* is on pp. 156–58.

27. Ibid., 156.

28. A. R. Müller, "Die Freiheit, ein Und zu gebrauchen: Zur hebräischen Konjunktion w," in R. Bartelmus and N. Nebes, eds., *Sachverhalt und Zeitbezug: Semitische und alttestamentliche Studien—Adolf Denz zum 65 Geburtstag* (Wiesbaden, 2001), 88.

29. J. Azevedo, "A Note on Verb-Compound Subject Agreement in Biblical Hebrew," *BN* 94 (1998), 39, 43.

3. Discussion

All the examples cited above in the discussion of the various BH studies are classified and discussed below according to their specific category of meaning and their accordance with the Arabic conceptions of *wāw al-maʿiyyah*. A survey of the examples leads to a basic classification into five categories: joint noun-phrases playing one syntactic role, examples conveying lack of agreement in number between subjects and predicates, interrupted syntactic structures, circumstantial clauses, and difficult verses. Next, each category is discussed separately.

3.1 Joint Noun-Phrases Playing One Syntactic Role

All the examples in this section contain joint noun-phrases serving one syntactic function, which is considered by scholars to demonstrate the *wāw* with the meaning “with” or “together with.”³⁰ The first example, Exod. 10:10: וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יְהוָה כֵּן ה' עִמָּכֶם כָּאֲשֶׁר וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת-טַפְכֶּם רְאוּ כִי רָעָה נִגַּד פְּנִיכֶם—“And he said to them, ‘The LORD be with you, if ever I let you **and your little ones** go! Look, you have some evil purpose in mind’”—includes the pair וְאֶת-טַפְכֶּם. The second member of this pair, טַפְכֶּם, is not semantically equivalent to the first member since the children are interpreted as accompanying their parents. However, the nuance of accompaniment derives from the meaning of the noun-phrases and not from the connecting conjunction. Syntactically, there is no reason to assume that the *wāw* itself conveys more than mere coordination, as demonstrated, for instance, by the RSV translation. The same can be said about all other examples under this category.

In Lev. 1:12: וַנִּתֵּחַ אֹתוֹ לְנִתְחָיו וְאֶת-רֹאשׁוֹ וְאֶת-פָּדְרוֹ וְעֶרְבֹךְ הַכֹּהֵן אֹתָם עַל-הָעֵצִים אֲשֶׁר וַיִּקַּח הַכֹּהֵן אֶת-הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ—“And he shall cut it into pieces, **and its head and its fat**, and the priest shall lay them in order upon the wood that is on the fire upon the altar”—again, the meaning of the noun-phrases וְאֶת-רֹאשׁוֹ וְאֶת-פָּדְרוֹ suggests that they are part of the offering, and semantically not its equivalent; rather, the *wāw* itself simply connects the three objects. The same nuance of lack of semantic equivalence and accompaniment may be found in the pair וְצִאֲצָאִיהָ in Isa. 42:5: כֹּה-אָמַר הָאֵל ה' בֹּרֵא הַשָּׁמַיִם וְנוֹטִיָּהֶם רָקַע הָאָרֶץ וְצִאֲצָאִיהָ נָתַן נְשָׁמָה לָעָם עָלֶיהָ וְרוּחַ לְהִלָּכִים בָּהּ—“Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth **and what comes from it**, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it.” A similar semantic nuance of accompaniment also appears in Exod. 12:8: וְאָכְלוּ אֶת-הַבָּשָׂר בַּלֵּילָה הַזֶּה צֶלִי-אֵשׁ וּמִצּוֹת עַל-מֶרְרִים יֹאכְלֶהוּ—“They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted (meat) on fire **and unleavened bread**, over bitter herbs they shall eat it,” where צֶלִי-אֵשׁ refers to the noun הַבָּשָׂר, and מִצּוֹת, being some sort of bread, cannot be understood as referring to הַבָּשָׂר as well, but only to something that is eaten. Another such example is Job 41:12: מִנִּחְיָרָיו יֵצֵא עָשָׁן כְּדוֹד נְפוּחַ וְאֶגְמוֹן—“Out of his nostrils comes forth smoke, as from a boiling pot **and burning rushes**,” where כְּדוֹד נְפוּחַ semantically accompanies נְפוּחַ.

30. Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar*, 484, §154a, n. 1(b) mentions all five examples discussed in this section; HALOT, 258, 4 mentions Isa. 42:5 and Exod. 12:8. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, 596, 3, mentions Exod. 12:8.

Though these five verses show joint noun-phrases that are not semantically equivalent, they play a similar syntactic role, and there is no reason to assume that the *wāw* conjoining them is the one conveying their semantic difference. The *wāw* in these cases is probably just a coordinator. An Arabic noun in a sequence of nouns playing one syntactic role can be regarded as *mafʿūl maʿahu* not on the basis of its semantic inequality to the other noun but only when it is marked by the accusative case. In the absence of such formal marking in BH there is no unequivocal way to differentiate regular coordinated noun-phrases from those that include a *mafʿūl maʿahu*, and such a differentiation cannot be done relying on semantic observations alone.

3.2 Examples Conveying Lack of Agreement in Number between Subjects and Predicates

In many studies a large group of examples is adduced in which the *wāw* of concomitance or accompaniment is present in connection with the lack of agreement between subjects and their predicate. Interpretation of the *wāw* in these cases as “with” solves the problem of lack of agreement, and allows the predicate to be attached directly only to the first noun-phrase. One such example, mentioned above in the survey of BH studies,³¹ is Exod. 21:4: **אִם-אֶדְנִיו יִתֵּן-לוֹ אִשָּׁה וְיִלְדָה-לוֹ בָּנִים אוֹ בָנוֹת הָאִשָּׁה וְיִלְדֶיהָ תְּהִיָּה לְאֶדְנֶיהָ וְהוּא יֵצֵא בְּנֶפֶשׁוֹ**—“If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife **and her children** shall be her master’s and he shall go out alone.” The predicate **תְּהִיָּה** is in 3rd fem. sg. and therefore agrees in number only with the noun **הָאִשָּׁה** and not with her children. Similar examples repeatedly mentioned above are 1 Sam. 25:42; 2 Sam. 14:9; Est. 4:16; and Neh. 5:14.

Nonetheless, it can still be questioned whether these examples really demonstrate *wāw* meaning “with” or merely reflect rules of agreement between plural nouns and their predicate similar to those regular in Arabic. An examination of the situation in Arabic is necessary at this point. On the one hand, Arabic has special rules of agreement between regularly coordinated plural subjects and their predicate, according to which two and more coordinated subjects usually follow one verb in the singular. On the other hand, Arabic also has a special construction in which a second subject can take the accusative; this is the *wāw al-maʿiyyah* construction, which is our main concern here. How do Arab grammarians differ concerning the functions of the *wāw* in these two constructions? The answer lies again in the case system. If a second noun in a sequence of nouns preceding a singular predicate is in the nominative, it is a second subject coordinated by a regular coordinative *wāw*. If the noun is in the accusative the type of coordination is irregular and the *wāw* is considered *wāw al-maʿiyyah* meaning “with,” e.g., *kāna wa-ʿabāhu ʿalā mā qad ʿalimnā*—“He was (i.e., stood) **with his father** [accusative] as far as we know.”³²

Is there a way to make the same differentiation in BH? On the one hand, BH has many examples of lack of agreement in number between subjects and their predicate.³³

31. HALOT, 258, 4; Clines, *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, 596, 3; Kaddari, *Dictionary*, 231, 9; Joüon and Muraoka, *Grammar*, 520–21, §150p.

32. The example is cited from Fischer, *Grammar of Classical Arabic*, 175, §328b.

33. On the great variety of examples lacking agreement in number in BH, see J. Levi, *Die Inkongruenz im biblischen Hebräisch* (Wiesbaden, 1987).

On the other, there is no case system in BH. There is, therefore, no formal way to differentiate the two types in BH, and the question of whether the *wāw* should be regarded as *wāw al-maʿiyyah* meaning “with” in examples lacking agreement in number is hypothetical and unanswered; and if an explanation along the lines of the *wāw al-maʿiyyah* is possible, no way exists to know to which of the numerous examples displaying lack of agreement in number in BH it should really apply.

3.3 Interrupted Syntactic Structures

The following two examples can be defined as interrupted syntactic structures since they exhibit a gap between certain coordinated members playing one syntactic role in the clause. In Gen. 44:2: **וְאֶת-גִּבְעֵי הַכֶּסֶף תִּשִּׂים בְּפִי אֶמְתַּחַת הַקֶּטֶן וְאֶת כֶּסֶף שִׁבְרוֹ**—“And put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, **and his money for the grain**”; and in 1 Sam. 6:11: **וַיִּשְׂמוּ אֶת-אָרוֹן ה' אֶל-הָעֲגֹלָה וְאֶת הָאֲרָגֹז וְאֶת עֲכָבְרֵי הַזֹּהָב**—“And they put the ark of the LORD on the cart, **and the box with the golden mice and the images of their tumors**”—a gap appears between the first object and the following other objects. In Gen. 44:2 **וְאֶת-גִּבְעֵי הַכֶּסֶף** is separated from **וְאֶת** and **כֶּסֶף שִׁבְרוֹ**, and in 1 Sam. 6:11 **וְאֶת-אָרוֹן ה'** is separated from **וְאֶת עֲכָבְרֵי הַזֹּהָב** and **וְאֶת צִלְמֵי טַחְרֵיהֶם**. The interruption in the sequence of objects in these verses is probably the trigger for seeking a different explanation for the *wāw* that connects the non-initial objects to the clause. In 1 Sam. 6:11, however, the interpretation of the *wāw* as “with” may apply to each of the three coordinated objects, which makes the identification as an interrupted construction irrelevant to the role of the *wāw* in this verse. In such a case this verse is simply another example of joint noun-phrases serving the same syntactic function and belongs to §3.1 above.

In any event, the consideration of interrupted syntactic structures as cases of *wāw* meaning “with” is not needed in order to explain them in a reasonable way. As I have shown elsewhere, interrupted syntactic structures, including those in which an object is separated from its verb, are an integral part of BH syntax; they should not be regarded as difficult, and do not require a special explanation.³⁴

3.4 Circumstantial Clauses

A number of examples of circumstantial clauses are also understood occasionally to convey the meaning “with.” One such example is Gen. 11:4: **וַיֹּאמְרוּ הֶבֶה נִבְנֶה-לָנוּ עִיר וּמִגְדָּל בְּשָׁמַיִם**—“Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower **with its top in the heavens**’.” Other examples of circumstantial clauses, cited above, are Deut. 5:23; 1 Sam. 17:41; 1 Kgs. 18:2; and 2 Kgs. 8:7—including two asyndetic circumstantial clauses in Exod. 12:11 and 22:9. Two questions are at stake regarding this category: (1) whether certain circumstantial clauses can be analyzed as cases of *wāw al-maʿiyyah* according to Arabic grammar, and (2) if such a category exists in Arabic, whether it can be identified in BH as well.

As to the first question, Arabic grammarians indeed indicate that circumstantial clause can be considered a case of *wāw al-maʿiyyah*, when a verb in the second clause is in the subjunctive; e.g., *hal taʿkulu as-samak wa-tašraba al-labana*—“Do you eat

34. T. Zewi, “Interrupted Syntactical Structures in Biblical Hebrew,” *ZAH* 12 (1999), 83–95.

[indicative verb] fish and **drink** [subjunctive verb] milk at the same time?”³⁵ As to the second question, this type of Arabic circumstantial clause is not the same as the BH examples cited above. Moreover, as was said above, BH does not differentiate any type of circumstantial clause from other types by a special formal marking similar to the Arabic use of subjunctive verbs; therefore, there is no way to distinguish them. As suggested by Steiner,³⁶ circumstantial clauses generally obtain their special status from their word order and not from any special meaning borne by their introducing conjunction. This view is strengthened by the existence of asyndetic circumstantial clauses, for which no meaning can be ascribed to any conjunction. Therefore, certain circumstantial clauses can perhaps be regarded as cases of *wāw al-maʿiyyah* in Arabic, but BH does not have a similar category.

3.5 Difficult Verses

The difficulty implicit in Exod. 1:5: **וַיְהִי כֹל-נֶפֶשׁ יִצְחָק יֶרֶךְ-יַעֲקֹב שִׁבְעִים נָפֶשׁ וַיּוֹסֶף הֵיָהּ בְּמִצְרַיִם**—“All the offspring of Jacob were seventy persons; **Joseph was already in Egypt**”—is discussed in detail above. The difficulty lies in the loose connection of the circumstantial clause to the preceding clause and the exclusion of Joseph from the count of Jacob’s descendants. Saadya Gaon resolves this difficulty in the verse by rendering the *wāw* as “with,” and other grammarians settle it in a similar manner.³⁷

Another difficult verse, and by far the best example reflecting the *wāw* meaning “with” in BH, is 1 Sam. 14:18: **וַיֹּאמֶר שָׂאוּל לְאַחִיָּה הַגִּישָׁה אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי-הָיָה אֲרוֹן הָאֱלֹהִים בְּיוֹם הַהוּא וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**—“And Saul said to Ahijah, ‘Bring hither the ark of God’. For the ark of God went at that time **with the people of Israel**.” The only reasonable interpretation of the verse as is to assume that the *wāw* introducing the noun-phrase **וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** means “with.”³⁸

The last example is 2 Sam. 12:30: **וַיִּקַּח אֶת-עֲטֹת-מִלְכָּם מֵעַל רִאשׁוֹ וּמִשְׁקֶלָהּ כֶּכֶר זָהָב וַאֲבָן יִקְרָה וַתְּהִי עַל-רֹאשׁ דָּוִד וְאֲבָן יִקְרָה וַתְּהִי עַל-רֹאשׁ דָּוִד**—“And he took the crown of their king from his head; the weight of it was a talent of gold, **and in it was a precious stone**; and it was placed on David’s head.” As stated previously, in this example the joint noun-phrase **וַאֲבָן יִקְרָה** seems to be included in the crown, and not joint to it. The employment of *wāw* instead of “with” introducing the noun-phrase **וַאֲבָן יִקְרָה**, and the detachment of this noun-phrase from the noun-phrase **עֲטֹת-מִלְכָּם**, both make this text again difficult. A rendering by “with” solves the problem of the meaning of *wāw*, while the detachment of the two contextually connected noun-phrases **עֲטֹת-מִלְכָּם** and **וַאֲבָן יִקְרָה** relates the verse also to the interrupted syntactic structures discussed above. Also note that the difficulty in this verse is solved in the parallel verse in 1 Chr. 20:2: **וַיִּקַּח דָּוִד אֶת-עֲטֹת-מִלְכָּם מֵעַל רִאשׁוֹ וַיִּמְצָאָהּ מִשְׁקָל כֶּכֶר-זָהָב וּבָא אֲבָן יִקְרָה וַתְּהִי עַל-רֹאשׁ דָּוִד**—“And David took the

35. Wright, *Grammar of Arabic*, 32c–33a, §15; Reckendorf, *Arabische Syntax*, 462, §231; Fischer, *Grammar of Classical Arabic*, 211, §410.1; Baalbaki, “On the Meaning of the *wāw al-maʿiyya* Construction,” 7–17; M. G. Carter, “*ṣarf et ḥilāf*: contribution à l’histoire de la grammaire arabe,” *Arabica* 20 (1973), 292–93. The Arabic example and its translation are cited from Wright, *Grammar*, 32d, §15.

36. Steiner, “Does the Biblical Hebrew Conjunction,” 260–61.

37. See n. 4 above. A. Niccacci, *The Syntax of the Verb in Classical Hebrew Prose* (Sheffield, 1990), 31–32, suggests that this structure conveys contrast.

38. As stated above, the LXX reads in this verse **לפני ישראל** “before Israel” instead of **וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** “with the people of Israel.”

crown of their king from his head; he found that it weighed a talent of gold, **and in it was a precious stone**; and it was placed on David's head."

The difficult texts of these three examples are indeed best solved by ascribing the meaning "with" to the *wāw*. Nonetheless, the doubts regarding all the other examples discussed above make us wonder whether we are allowed to rely only on three supposedly sound examples, in which attaching the meaning "with" to the *wāw* is called for in order to solve difficulties.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, among the numerous examples adduced by scholars as cases of the so-called *wāw al-ma'yyah* only three examples of the conjunction *wāw* in BH can perhaps be explained by the meaning "with." These are Exod. 1:5; 1 Sam. 14:18; and 2 Sam. 12:30, discussed in the foregoing section. In these three examples the application of the meaning "with" to the conjunction *wāw* is intended to solve a difficulty in the Hebrew text. In all of them there also is a suggested alternative analysis or a text-critical solution. In all other examples, the meaning "with" or "together with" is either unsuitable and should be explained alternatively, or it is merely possible and disputable. Only three examples, in which a need to solve a difficulty in the Hebrew text is felt, are in any case too scarce to allow the presentation of the meaning "with" or "together with" for the *wāw* as genuine and equal in status to its other meanings in BH dictionaries, grammars, and other studies.